

Top Secret 219

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Thursday August 11, 1977

CG NIDC 77-186C

NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

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State Dept. review completed

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Thursday August 11, 1977.

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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US-USSR: Bilateral Relations

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[] //Georgiy Arbatov, the head of the USA Institute in Moscow, told US Ambassador Toon on Monday that there was a need for a continuing dialogue and "real communications" between the USSR and the US and offered his personal view that the next two or three months would be "crucial" for bilateral relations. Arbatov's private remarks seem to hold out a hope for improved relations, despite his pessimistic and severe article in Pravda last week.//

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[] //Arbatov, Moscow's major public proponent of detente, was particularly careful in responding to the possibility of a summit meeting between President Carter and President Brezhnev. Unlike other Soviet spokesmen, Arbatov said that it would not be necessary to sign important documents at such a meeting but that something positive should come from these talks. He stressed that any summit must be carefully prepared with the understanding that it would contribute to future progress.//

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[] Just as his *Pravda* article was presumably cleared at the Politburo level, Arbatov's remarks on several issues that have received much public attention from the Soviets in recent months also seemed to convey an authoritative endorsement.

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--[] On the neutron bomb issue, Arbatov said there was sincere concern in responsible Soviet circles that the weapon would lower the nuclear threshold in Europe.

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--[] On cruise missiles, he hoped that the Vienna talks--presumably between Foreign Minister Gromyko and Secretary Vance next month--could be used to limit the "range and application" of these weapons, but he dodged the ambassador's effort to elicit a possible Soviet compromise for limiting cruise missiles.

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--[] //On broadcasts to the USSR from the West, Arbatov noted that the Voice of America had become "somewhat better."//

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25X1 -- [REDACTED] //On human rights issues, he stressed that the Soviets had a "good case" against dissident leader Anatoly Shcharansky and seemed to be warning the US not to get involved.//

25X1 [REDACTED] //The only other subject discussed by Arbatov at any length was Secretary of State Vance's trip to Moscow in March, which he treated as a lost opportunity. Detente could have been "put back on the rails," according to Arbatov, if the Secretary had brought with him an acceptable SALT package. As it was, the US proposals had "surprised" Moscow and had even convinced some Soviet leaders that Washington had deliberately put together an unacceptable package in order to proceed with new weapons systems.//

25X1 [REDACTED] It is possible that Arbatov's waxing and waning on the subject of detente reflects the mood of the Soviet leadership.

25X1 [REDACTED] He has written three major articles on Soviet-US relations since December, expressing pessimism in the first article and in his most recent effort last week. In a February article, however, Arbatov was cautiously optimistic because he saw the US and Soviet leaders as sharing a common understanding of the realities of the nuclear age. His remarks to Ambassador Toon on Monday seemed similarly designed to convey optimism--but only predicated on a recognition by the US that adjustments on its part are necessary.

25X1 [REDACTED] The Soviet foreign affairs weekly *New Times* has also registered optimism with regard to policies of the US administration. For the second time in a month, the journal has written that Washington may be "rectifying" its line toward the USSR.

25X1 [REDACTED]

25X1 [REDACTED]

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EGYPT-SOMALIA: Support and Aid

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//The Egyptian ambassador to Somalia briefed US Ambassador Loughran in Mogadiscio on Tuesday on his recent talks with Egyptian President Sadat in Cairo and his subsequent report to Somali President Siad. Sadat pledged Egyptian support for Siad, but made no specific military commitments. The Egyptians have the impression the US is proceeding with plans to provide arms to Somalia. Siad expressed disappointment with the delay in receiving arms from the US and Arab countries. He expects an Ethiopian counteroffensive in the Ogaden in October, and the Egyptians believe Siad may ask for troops from Arab League members.//

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//The Egyptian ambassador said Sadat had pledged his full support for Siad and had promised soon to put his assurances in writing. Sadat did not provide a reply to Siad's request for additional weapons and MIG-21 pilots. Siad told the Egyptians that, apart from weapons, Somalia's most urgent needs were for uniforms and medical supplies.//

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//The Somali leader said he could put 100,000 more men into the Ogaden region of Ethiopia if he had enough weapons to arm them. Siad had also asked the Egyptian ambassador to ask Sadat to provide rocket launchers and spare parts for surface-to-air missiles. The Somali President did not ask for heavy weapons.//

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//According to Siad, the Somalis believe that large numbers of Soviet-trained pilots and officers will join the Ethiopian forces by October and that Addis Ababa will then launch a counterattack. Siad said he could not understand the US delay in providing military support, and he also complained that Arab states--Saudi Arabia in particular--were slow in furnishing weapons.//

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[REDACTED] The Egyptian ambassador told Ambassador Loughran that, during his talks in Cairo, Foreign Minister Fahmi had said the US would provide military aid to Siad but had not yet decided on a means of delivery. Fahmi had asked whether Siad would consent to the transfer of US arms through Egypt, to which the Egyptian ambassador replied affirmatively. Fahmi said he would take this up with Secretary Vance.//

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[REDACTED] //Siad told the Egyptians that if Somali forces encountered Cubans or East Europeans aiding the Ethiopians on the front lines, he would ask Arab League nations for troops. The Egyptian ambassador believes Siad will shortly ask for Arab League forces, even in the absence of evidence that foreign advisers are aiding Ethiopia in the fighting.//

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[REDACTED] //Siad said that the town of Dire Dawa was Somalia's next target in the Ogaden and that he was confident it could be taken within a week or so. He declared his determination to keep the territory his forces had already seized in Ethiopia. Siad was adamant in his refusal to deal with Ethiopian Chairman Mengistu, under any circumstances, but indicated he might be willing to talk to a successor.

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LEBANON: Shelling Intensifies

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[REDACTED] *The level of shelling between Palestinians and Christians in southern Lebanon has intensified in the past several days, as has shelling from Israel directed against Palestinian positions across the border, but there has been no indication of movement on the ground, nor of any impending Israeli military move into Lebanon.*

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[REDACTED] The Palestinians yesterday accused the Israelis of massing troops along the border, of beginning massive shelling, and of moving gunboats near Tyre.

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CHINA-USSR: Border River Talks

25X1 [] A Chinese Foreign Ministry official has confirmed that Chinese and Soviet representatives recently resumed the border river navigation talks that had been suspended for more than two years.

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25X1 [] The official commented that there was no possibility of a change in overall Sino-Soviet relations, whatever the outcome of the navigation talks.

25X1 [] The river talks, which began in 1951 to discuss routine navigational matters, have been stalled since 1974, when the Chinese attempted to add to the agenda an item related to their territorial claim to Hei-hsia-tzu island. Earlier reporting had indicated that the talks would resume--probably in late July--after the two sides had agreed to an arrangement that would not prejudice either's claims to Hei-hsia-tzu and other disputed islands in the border rivers.

25X1 [] The move to reopen the talks indicates that both sides are interested in dealing with practical problems connected with the border rivers, but both Chinese and Soviet officials have pointed out that reopening talks is not an indication of significant improvement in their long-hostile relationship.

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] anti-Soviet rhetoric in Chinese propaganda on a broad range of other issues has not changed. [REDACTED]

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CHINA-INDIA: Relations Cooling

[REDACTED] //An official Chinese protest to the Indian government concerning Prime Minister Desai's reception on July 22 for Tibet's exiled Dalai Lama signals Chinese irritation but will not seriously weaken the intention of either nation to improve relations. The protest, delivered last week, accuses the Indian government of interfering in Chinese "internal affairs" and of supporting "traitorous" activities by exiled Tibetans. The Indians have rejected the protest and denied supporting refugee activities directed at any other country.//

[REDACTED] //The Chinese had hoped for a slow improvement in relations with the new Indian government. Some progress had been made while Indira Gandhi was prime minister with the return of a Chinese ambassador to New Delhi last September. Trade relations were reestablished between the two countries last month.//

[REDACTED] //The Chinese also undoubtedly took as a hopeful sign the determination of the Desai government to moderate India's close relations with the USSR.//

[REDACTED] //The reception of the Dalai Lama, however, clearly irritated the Chinese. Peking is not convinced that India fully accepts China's control of Tibet.//

[REDACTED] //Peking has also noted that the Desai government has marked out a tough position on the border issue. In May, Desai said publicly that the Chinese must take the initiative in solving the border problem, "because they were the aggressors" in the 1962 border war.

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[REDACTED] //Nevertheless, Peking wants to avoid increasing tensions with New Delhi if only to avoid pushing India closer to the USSR. Having made its point about the Dalai Lama, China probably will not dwell on the matter if the Indians do not.//

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[REDACTED] //The Indians, for their part, went out of their way to show that they wish to normalize relations with the Chinese. Their rejection of the Chinese protest was relatively mildly stated. The fact that the two nations have engaged in a dialogue, however negative, is an indication that both sides are seeking some lessening of tensions. [REDACTED]

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BRIEF

Uruguay

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[REDACTED] Uruguayan President Mendez' announcement on Tuesday that Uruguay will hold general elections and return to civilian rule in 1981 is unlikely to bring about a quick resumption of political activity. The military-dominated government will continue its ban on politics until some time in 1980.

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[REDACTED] The announcement was the first specific public confirmation of what had been only a vague commitment when Mendez became president last summer after the ouster of former president Bordaberry. Uruguay joins three other Latin American military governments--those of Peru, Bolivia, and Chile--that have announced their intention to hold elections early in the 1980s.

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